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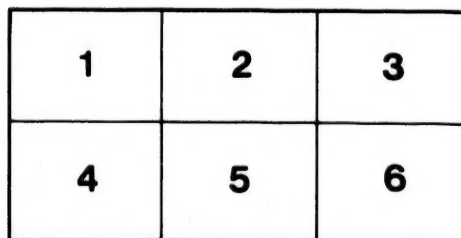
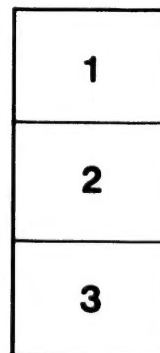
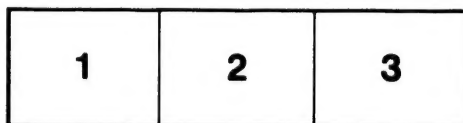
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The Swiss and Piedmontese on Red River.*

BY REV. DR. BRYCE.

NEARLY twenty years ago the writer had occasion to stop over on his journey through Minnesota at Breckenridge, a small town on the Red River, which was for a time the terminus of the railway by which travellers came to Manitoba. Spending the night at this place he fell into conversation with an American settler, who declared himself to be the descendant of one of the former Swiss residents of Red River. This allusion led the writer to investigate the matter, and now the facts are being recovered of a former considerable settlement from Switzerland and Piedmont, near where Winnipeg now stands. Of this colony there is scarcely a trace remaining except in the books, a list of which is given below. The last of these, published during 1891, is a most interesting account by a Swiss woman, Mrs. Adams, of her journey and that of her countrymen, in 1821, from Switzerland to the then inhospitable banks of the Red River.

But even before these Switzers, there had come to Red River, as escort to Lord Selkirk, in 1816, a band of military settlers. These had been given holdings on what is now the St. Boniface side of Red River. Many of them spoke German.

*Journal of Rev. John West (London) 1824.

The Red River Settlement by Alexander Ross (London) 1836.

Brochures of the Manitoba Historical Society, Winnipeg, 1878-91.

Manitoba: Infancy, Growth, etc., by the writer (London) 1882.

Early Days at Red River Settlement. Minnesota Historical Society (St. Paul), 1891.

and on this account the little river Seine, which empties into Red River opposite Point Douglas, was long known as German Creek. The name St. Boniface itself, is that of Winifred or Boniface, the German apostle and patron saint, and commemorates this early German-speaking people. It is needless to go into the story of the Red River troubles of 1814-16. It has been often told. But in the last named year, Lord Selkirk, coming to the Northwest to help his struggling colony, brought with him, up the Canadian lakes, about one hundred men, who had been among the mercenaries engaged by Britain to fight in the war of 1812-15 in defence of Canada against the United States. These men were of the class spoken of so tenderly by Wordsworth:—

"That stern yet kindly spirit who contrains
The Savoyard to quit his naked rocks,
The free born Swiss to leave his narrow vales."

At the close of the war of 1816 these foreign regiments had been disbanded, and eighty men of the corps called after their colonel, the "De Meuron regiment," were taken from Montreal, and twenty men of the De Watteville regiment from Kingston, and these under their four officers, Captains D'Orsonneus and Matthey, and Lieutenants Fanche and Graffenreith found their way up to Lake Superior. After having encamped for a time near Fort William, at a locality still known as "Point De Meuron," they pushed on, and coming in the winter of 1816-17 by way of Lake of the Woods, crossed the country to Pembina, and descending the Red River, captured Fort Douglas on the site of the Winnipeg of to-day. Their settlement by Lord Selkirk took place shortly afterward. Among these colonists there were no women, and the lonely bachelors of German Creek were disconsolate in their new homes. Being old soldiers they were turbulent, and Sheriff Ross is somewhat severe in referring to their selfishness and discontent. They made but little progress, though in 1818, the priest Joseph Norbert Provencher, afterwards first Roman Catholic Bishop on the Red River, arrived from Lower Canada to minister to them, most of them being Roman Catholics.

In the year 1821, there came to the banks of Red River, a somewhat remark-

able stream of Swiss immigration. This was also begun under the direction of Lord Selkirk. As anxious to fill up the vacant lands of his Assiniboia, as a government agent of to-day to induce settlers to come to Manitoba, Lord Selkirk seized hold of one of the officers of the disbanded De Watteville regiment, Col. Rudolphe May, and dispatched him to his native Switzer-land to bring out colonists. Col. May was a native of Berne, and on his return to his own land, scattered widely French and German copies of a somewhat highly-colored prospectus of the attractions of Red River. His efforts were successful, and a band of Swiss, all Protestants, but of whom about three-quarters were French-speaking, enrolled themselves as colonists. Mrs. Adams tells us that the party to the number of one hundred and sixty-five assembled at a village near Basle, a Swiss town on the Rhine, May 3rd, 1821. On the 30th of the same month the emigrants, having come down the Rhine, sailed from the Dutch seaport of Dort, in the British ship "Lord Wellington." The sea voyage was tedious, extending over nearly four months, and the weary settlers landed at York factory, on Hudson's Bay, about August 27th.

The journey from Hudson's Bay to Red River, made in York boats, was tiresome and dangerous, and the worn out colonists landed at their future home, which was wild and unattractive enough, about the end of October. The arrival of the Swiss made a great stir in the Selkirk Colony. They did not arouse the opposition, that the De Meurons had met. Though Sheriff Ross speaks of their unsuitability as immigrants, they having been "watch and clock makers, pastry cooks, musicians," and the like yet he approvingly says, "As to character they must have proved an acquisition to any community, being a quiet, orderly and moral people, remarkable withal for the number of handsome young people, both lads and lasses among them." Rev. John West narrates very graphically the circumstances of the raid made by the lonely De Meuron's settlers upon the attractive Swiss girls on their arrival. Sheriff Ross at once given to the Swiss families which contained hand-

not so blessed were compelled to pitch tents for themselves outside the fort, and to suffer the rigors of the winter. The chaplain was busy: the De Meuron bachelors and the Swiss girls married in hot haste; and Mrs. Adams says, "I saw an amusing incident during this matrimonial fair. An eager De Meuron seized a woman by the hand, saying 'I want to marry you,' but was much disappointed when she told him, 'I have a husband.'"

It is not easy for us now to race all the names of this De Meuron and Swiss immigration, but from various sources we have recovered the following names from this body, which in all contained about two hundred and fifty persons: Scheidecker (Mrs. Adam's maiden name), Perret, Rondo, Gervais, Massie, Chettain, Bender, Laprevo, Quiluby, Bendowitz, Kralic, Wassoliosky, Rhe, Jankosky, Wachter, Lassota, Luidece, Wareklur, Krusel, Jolicoeur, Maquette, Lelonde, Schmidt.

Mrs. Adams says that the difficulties of settlement at this time were increased by the visitation of the Red River by grasshoppers, but Ross declares that the grasshoppers had all disappeared in 1821. However this may be, it is certain that the Swiss settlers became thoroughly discouraged. It is said that even in the year of their arrival five Swiss families deserted the settlement, and went south to the Mississippi. Others left two years afterwards, and found homes in the Western States. It remained for the great flood of 1826 to convince these settlers, who had little attachment to British institutions, that they could not make Selkirk colony their home. The whole De Meuron and Swiss body, numbering two hundred and forty three persons, departed for the United States June 24th, 1826. Sheriff Ross assumes the aggressive when he speaks of them as follows: "This party, now on the wing to be off, were joined by every idler and other persons averse to Red River; and so little was their further residence in the colony desired, that food and other necessities were furnished to them gratis by the Company, with the view of hastening their departure." With this parting word we may leave the turbulent soldiers and the timid Swiss, who found inhabitable the neighbor-

hood of what is now a flourishing city of some thirty thousand souls. Their descendants are scattered over the Western States, one of the Swiss having become a general in the American army. Evidently this element reached the banks of the Red River more than half a century too soon.

Two White Roses.

BY D. L. DALTON.

PARIS is a rich city, and proud of its riches. It has heaps of gold, and a great abundance of rubies and diamonds. Its treasures are countless, its luxuries boundless. Its wide-spread mantle wants but one tinge to complete its splendour, and that is—flowers. It would hardly be believed that there is a scarcity of flowers in Paris, but it is true nevertheless.

It has fewer flowers than precious stones. That queen of the world could more easily encircle her brow with brilliants and emeralds than with daisies and orange blossoms. To be sure there is a flower market in this opulent city, where the ladies of the nobility procure their elegant camellias. The botanist goes there for his rare tulip, and the grisette to pluck a sweet-scented gilly-flower. But these flowers, like many other Parisian productions have but a fictitious existence, they are temporarily supported by the artificial heat introduced into the pots, but soon droop and fade away. The purchaser, who thought he possessed a living and healthful bloom, finds, upon his return home that he is the owner of a sickly faded flower—a fit emblem of the fleeting pleasures of the world. It should be added, for the credit of Paris, that there are also several magnificent temples dedicated to Flora. In some of the most magnificent streets of the city may be seen splendid stores, kept by beautiful and bewitching young ladies, in which there are handsome miniature alters erected to this goddess. There you will find the budding rose, whose tints resembles the first blush of a modest maiden; the lily, emblem of purity, with its golden petals and alabaster cups, the moss rose, the favorite